

ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
Acting in its capacity as
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
APRIL 6, 2015

A meeting of the Water Pollution Control Authority was called to order by Chairman Kaupin in the Council Chambers of the Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, Connecticut on Monday, April 6, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 6:25 p.m.

ROLL-CALL – Present were Commissioners Arnone, Bosco, Cekala, Deni, Edgar, Hall, Kaupin, Lee, Mangini, Stokes and Szewczak. Also present were Town Manager, Matthew Coppler; Assistant Town Manager, Derrik Kennedy; Town Clerk, Suzanne Olechnicki; Town Attorney, Kevin Deneen

MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING

MOTION #6218 by Commissioner Mangini, seconded by Commissioner Deni to accept the minutes of the March 16, 2015 meeting.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #6218** adopted 11-0-0.

MOTION #6219 by Commissioner Lee, seconded by Commissioner Hall to suspend the rules to address Item 5A under Miscellaneous.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #6219** adopted 11-0-0.

NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSSION RE: MULTI-UNIT HOMES TIER CHARGES

Mr. Coppler stated there have been on-going conversations with Bigelow Commons. He noted Bigelow Commons would like to have their usage be seen as a single tier usage, and their argument is that each individual unit is using less than the 20,000 gallons, but the way the Town bills them is based upon what the meter is reading, and the meter may have 20 to 60 units, which drives it up over that 20,000 gallons. He noted for discussion purposes only, he included in the Council's packet a worst case scenario based upon those apartments. He stated they also looked at some of the big apartment complexes in Enfield and calculated what the lost revenue might be to the Town of Enfield if they did what Bigelow Commons is suggesting, and that figure comes to \$62,000.

He stated this dovetails with the two, three and four family homes because it's the same concept.

Commissioner Mangini questioned if this pertains to multi-unit homes and/or apartments or just the apartments. Mr. Coppler stated they had previous discussions relating to the two, three and four family homes, and the commonality between those and larger multi-unit properties is they all have single meters in that they don't individually meter the units. He noted it really is the same concept, and if they're going to be doing it for one class, they might as well do it for the other class as well.

Commissioner Mangini questioned whether "units" means "apartments", and Mr. Coppler indicated that's correct.

Commissioner Mangini stated two, three or four family homes are owned by an individual, and they pass along their charge to their tenants. She stated her impression the owner of an apartment complex could or should do the same thing. Mr. Coppler stated that's the intention of Bigelow Commons. He noted Bigelow Commons indicated they'll be installing individual meters in each of the units.

Commissioner Mangini questioned what Mr. Coppler is proposing or suggesting that the Council should adopt. Mr. Coppler stated he is just providing information so the Council can make a decision.

Mr. Coppler stated the Town designed a two-tier system, and the Town Council and WPCA agreed that was the best way to go. He noted there's been a request from a large complex, as well as from two, three and four family home owners that have single meters to do something different than what's currently being done.

Commissioner Arnone stated he would not want to see large businesses such as apartment complexes having to raise rates because of something that is probably not fair in the long run with the two-tier system. He noted some divide the amount of water usage by the amount of apartments so it avoids having to install meters. He stated he doesn't want to see the loss of revenue going back on the homeowner. He noted according to the national average, there's a base charge when it's over a certain size meter. He stated if Bigelow Commons was using an eight or ten inch water meter, they'd get a thousand dollar charge every quarter just to have that meter.

Mr. Coppler stated they started putting meters in a number of their units already outside the Town of Enfield. He noted Bigelow is also paying for water, and this is an attempt to reduce their overhead cost and passing the water consumption as well as the sewer consumption onto the individuals, therefore, they need a methodology that will hold up if someone challenges them. He noted they found the meter is the best way to do this. He pointed out the meters are not for the Town's purpose, but rather for Bigelow's purpose. He noted they have deduct meters as well. Commissioner Arnone stated those units should be checked to make sure they're dividing the units into gallons because he doesn't want to throw the tax burden back on the homeowner.

Commissioner Cekala stated her belief there should be a point where the Town stops giving adjustments or making amendments to what they've done.

Commissioner Deni stated his impression they're proposing to keep them under the 20,000 even with the meters, therefore, the meters are benefiting only Bigelow Commons or other multi-units. He acknowledged there may be some things that should be looked at, however, he agrees with Commissioner Cekala because it seems the Town keeps backing off what they originally proposed.

Commissioner Szewczak agreed with Commissioner Cekala. She stated her belief the line has already been crossed. She stated she has no sympathy for multi-family homes because they're a business, they're renting, and they should all have their own meters.

Commissioner Lee stated the model currently doesn't have a mechanism for dealing with measuring meters rather than deduct meters. He noted they have set the policy to accommodate well users to bring a privately owned, non-water company meter to the municipality. He questioned whether that would be the same as accepting readings from an apartment complex. Mr. Coppler responded they are two different things because one is well-based.

Commissioner Lee stated he would not entertain anything other than total volume divided by units and as long as it was under 20,000 gallons.

Commissioner Szewczak stated she does not want to see individual bills come from large apartment complexes because the sewer usage goes to the owners of the buildings, and it never goes to the tenant. She noted if the Town starts sending individual bills to tenants based on water meters that the owner installed, it would create a "muddy soup". She concluded stating she doesn't want to see the system the Town put in place broken down.

Commissioner Mangini stated she's not supportive of this initiative at this point.

Commissioner Bosco agreed with Commissioner Arnone regarding dividing the amount of water usage by the amount of apartments.

Chairman Kaupin stated he doesn't mind tweaking the program, but at some point the tweaking has to stop. He noted they have to figure out how to make the system continue to be equitable. He stated compared to other municipalities, Enfield's rates are low. He noted by Enfield setting up a two-tier system, they are different and set themselves up for some of these kinds issues.

Commissioner Arnone stated the owners should always get the bill regardless of the number of units. He noted most towns have been dealing with this for 40 years. He stated Enfield has had this system for only one year, therefore, it should be expected this will happen. He noted a lot of towns ended up making a third tier to take into account the multi-family housing. He stated they should look at some means of having a background charge for large commercial meters. He pointed out other towns have had 40 years of practice with this system, and he's amazed Enfield got this far.

Commissioner Hall questioned what the new apartments are doing on North Maple Street. She questioned if they're making provisions ahead of time for this. Mr. Coppler stated he's not aware of the installation of individual water meters and water lines for each unit, but rather he believes each building will be fed by an individual line with some meters.

Mr. Coppler stated he will provide more information for the next meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS

RESOLUTION #6220 by Commissioner Lee, seconded by Commissioner Arnone.

WHEREAS, the Enfield Water Pollution Control Authority values the opinions and comments of its constituents; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 86-52(f), the Enfield Water Pollution Control Authority must hold a public hearing on the proposed sewer service fees and rates for the upcoming fiscal year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Enfield Water Pollution Control Authority shall conduct a public hearing in the Town Council Chambers at Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Monday, May 4, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. on the proposed sewer service fees and rates for Fiscal Year 2014/2015*.

Mr. Coppler stated the Council probably won't be voting on the final rates until after the budget is adopted.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #6220** adopted 11-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #6221 by Commissioner Lee, seconded by Commissioner Mangini to adjourn.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #6221** adopted 11-0-0, and the meeting stood adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

* s/h/b 2015/2016